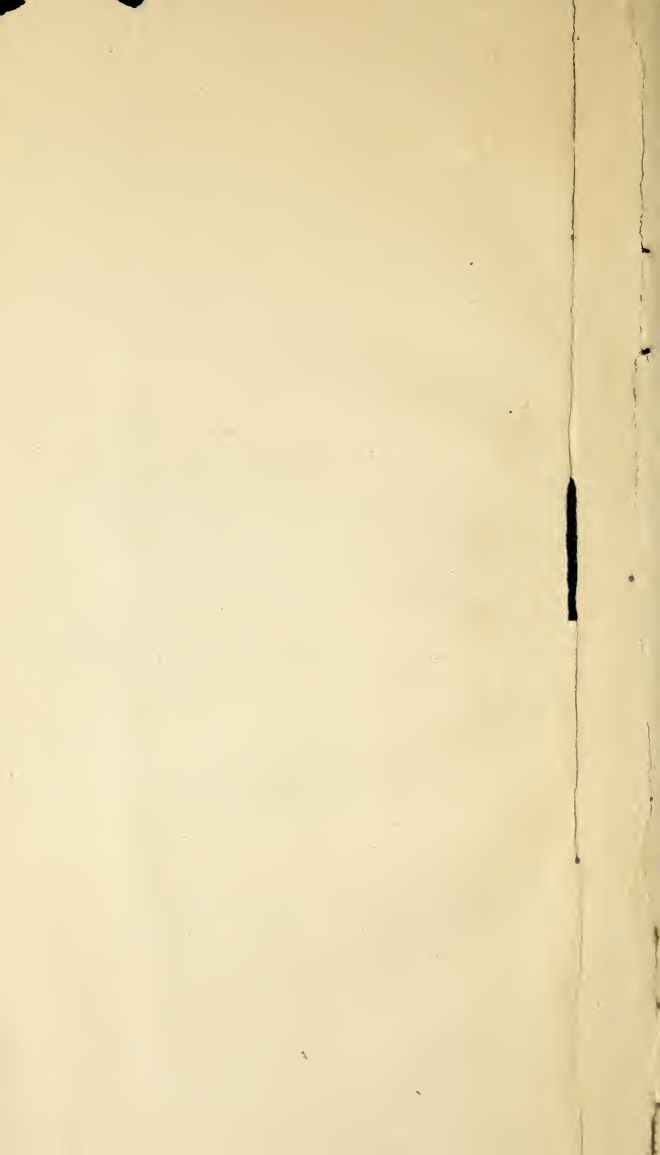


ENEVOLENT
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THE NEXT STEP:

A

Benevolent Feudalism.

BY W. J. GHENT.

PUBLISHED BY
THE COLLECTIVIST SOCIETY,
NEW YORK.

May, 1902.



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PREFACE.

It is generally conceded that the *régime* of free competition is over. Industry is being systematized and unified on a constantly enlarging scale. The future form of production becomes therefore a matter of absorbing interest to all thinking citizens.

The writer of our first pamphlet, "Socialism and Collectivism," holds that the next form will be national co-operation. *The present pamphlet presents a startling alternative.*

It lies with the popular mandate to determine which of two powerful tendencies is to be supported—the one making for Industrial Democracy and the other making for Industrial Oligarchy.

Some comment on Mr. Ghent's article will be found in an addendum (pages 31-32). THE COLLECTIVIST SOCIETY.

Previous issue in this series:

No. 1. "An Exposition of Socialism and Collectivism." By a Churchman. 51 pages.

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THE NEXT STEP: A Benevolent Feudalism.*

BY W. J. GHENT.

THE next distinct stage in the socio-economic evolution of America may be something entirely different from any of the forms usually predicted. Anarchist prophecies are, of course, futile; and the Tolstoyan Utopia of a return to primitive production, with its prodigal waste of effort and consequent impoverishment of the race, allures but few minds. The Kropotkinian dream of a communistic union of shop industry and agriculture is of a like type; and well-nigh as barren are the Neo-Jeffersonian visions of a general revival of small-farm and small-shop production and the dominance of a middle-class democracy. The orthodox economists, with their notions of a slightly modified Individualism, wherein each unit secures the just reward of his capacity and service, are but worshiping an image which

*Reprinted, by courtesy of the editors, from *The Independent*, of April 3, 1902. [*The Independent*, a weekly magazine: New York, 130 Fulton St.]

they have created out of their books, and which has no real counterpart in life; and finally, the Marxists, who predict the establishment of a co-operative commonwealth, are, to say the least, too sanguine in foreshortening the time of its triumph. Whatever the more distant future may bring to pass, there is but little evidence to prove that collectivism will be the next status of society. Rather, that coming status, of which the contributing forces are now energetically at work and of which the first phases are already plainly observable, will be something in the nature of a Benevolent Feudalism.

That the concentration of capital and the increase of individual holdings of wealth will continue is almost unanimsously conceded. Forty years ago Marx laid down the formula of capitalist accumulation which has ever since been a fixed article of creed with the orthodox Socialists. "One capitalist always kills many" is its central maxim. And only recently Prof. John B. Clark, doubtless our most distinguished representative of the orthodox economists, declared, in the pages of *THE INDEPENDENT*, that

"the world of the near future . . . will present a condition of vast and ever-growing inequality. . . . The rich will continually grow richer, and the multi-millionaires will approach the billion-dollar standard."

It is a view that needs no particular buttressing of authority, for it is held by most of those who seriously scan the outlook.

There are, it is not to be disputed, certain tendencies and data which apparently conflict with this view. There is a marked persistence, and in some cases a growth, of small-unit farming and of small-shop production and distribution. This tendency is strongly insisted upon by Prince Kropotkin and by the German Socialist Bernstein, and is conceded, tho cautiously, by a number of other radicals, among them the Belgian Socialist Vandervelde. That it is a real tendency seems unquestioned on the face of the figures from Germany, France, England and Belgium; and it is not unlikely that further confirmation will be found in the detailed reports of the last United States census. Furthermore, the great commercial combinations are not necessarily a proof of individual increase of wealth. Often, perhaps generally, they result in this individual increase; but the two things are not inevitably related. These combinations are generally, as William Graham pointed out nearly twelve years ago, a massing together of separate portions of capital, small, great and moderate—a union of capitals for a common purpose while still separately

owned. Lipton's great company, for instance, has over 62,000 shareholders; and many of America's most powerful combinations are built up out of a multitude of small and moderate holdings.

But tho these facts and tendencies be admitted, they do not really affect the foregoing generalization. The drift toward small-unit production and distribution in certain lines argues no growth of economic independence. On the contrary, it is attended by a constant pressure and constraint. The more the great combinations increase their power, the greater is the subordination of the small concerns. They may, for one reason or another, find it possible, and even fairly profitable, to continue; but they will be more and more confined to particular activities, to particular territories, and in time to particular methods, all dictated and enforced by the pressure of the larger concerns. The petty tradesmen and producers are thus an economically dependent class; and their dependence increases with the years. In a like position, also, are the owners of small and moderate holdings in the trusts. The larger holdings—often the single largest holding—determines the rules of the game; the smaller ones are either acquiescent, or if recalcitrant, are powerless to enforce their will. Especially is

this true in America, where the head of a corporation is often an absolute ruler, who determines not only the policy of the enterprise, but the *personnel* of the board of directors.

The tendencies thus make, on the one hand, toward the centralization of vast power in the hands of a few men—the morganization of industry, as it were—and on the other, toward a vast increase in the number of those who compose the economically dependent classes. The latter number is already stupendous. The laborers and mechanics were long ago brought under the yoke through their divorcement from the land and the application of steam to factory operation. They are economically unfree except in so far as their organizations make possible a collective bargaining for wages and hours. The growth of commerce raised up an enormous class of clerks and helpers, perhaps the most dependent class in the community. The growth and partial diffusion of wealth in America has in fifty years largely altered the character of domestic service and increased the number of servants many fold. Railroad pools and farm-implement trusts have drawn a tightening cordon about the farmers. The professions, too, have felt the change. Behind many of our important newspapers are private com-

mercial interests which dictate their general policy, if not, as is frequently the case, their particular attitude upon every public question; while the race for endowments made by the greater number of the churches and by all colleges except a few State-supported ones, compels a cautious regard on the part of synod and faculty for the wishes, the views and prejudices of men of great wealth. To this growing deference of preacher, teacher and editor is added that of two yet more important classes—the makers and the interpreters of law. The record of legislation and judicial interpretation regarding slavery previous to the Civil War has been paralleled in recent years by the record of legislatures and courts in matters relating to the lives and health of manual workers, especially in such cases as employers' liability and factory inspection. Thus, with a great addition to the number of subordinate classes, with a tremendous increase of their individual components, and with a corresponding growth of power in the hands of a few score magnates, there is needed little further to make up a socio-economic status that contains all the essentials of a renascent feudalism.

It is, at least in its beginning, less a personal than a class feudalism. History may repeat itself, as the adage runs; but

not by identical forms and events. The great spirals of evolutionary progress carry us for a time back to the general direction of older journeyings, but not to the well-worn pathways themselves. The old feudalism exacted faithful service, industrial and martial, from the underling; protection and justice from the overlord. It is not likely that personal fidelity, as once known, can ever be restored: the long period of dislodgment from the land, the diffusion of learning, the exercise of the franchise, and the training in individual effort have left a seemingly unbridgeable chasm between the past and the present forms. But tho personal fidelity, in the old sense, is improbable, group fidelity, founded upon the conscious dependence of a class, is already observable, and it grows apace. Out of the sense of class dependence arises the extreme deference which we yield, the rapt homage which we pay—not as individuals, but as units of a class—to the men of wealth. We do not know them personally, and we have no sense of personal attachment. But in most things we grant them priority. We send them or their legates to the Senate to make our laws; we permit them to name our administrators and our judiciary; we listen with eager attention to their utterances and we abide by their

judgment. Not always, indeed; for some of us grumble at times and ask angrily where it will all end. We talk threateningly of instituting referendums to curb excessive power; of levying income taxes, or of compelling the Government to acquire the railroads and the telegraphs. We subscribe to newspapers and other publications which criticise the acts of the great corporations, and we hail as a new Gracchus the ardent reformer who occasionally comes forth for a season to do battle for the popular cause. But this revolt is, for the most part, sentimental; it is a mental attitude but rarely transmutable into terms of action. It is, moreover, sporadic and flickering; it dies out after a time, and we revert to our usual moods, concerning ourselves with our particular interests and letting the rest of the world wag as it will.

The new feudalism is thus characterized by a class dependence rather than by a personal dependence. But it differs in still other respects from the old. It is qualified and restricted, and by agencies hardly operative in medieval times. Democracy tends to restrain it, and ethics to moralize it. Tho it has its birth and nurture out of the "rough and unsocialized barbarians of wealth," in Mr. Henry D. Lloyd's phrase, its youth and maturity promise a modification of character. More and more it tends to become a *be-*

nevolent feudalism. On the ethical side it is qualified by a growing and diffusive sense of responsibility and of kinship. The principle of the "trusteeship of great wealth" having found lodgment, like a seed, in the erstwhile barren soil of mammonism, has become a flourishing growth. The enormous benefactions for social purposes, which have been common of late years, and which in 1901 reached a total of \$107,000,000, could come only from men and women who have been taught to feel an ethical duty to society. It is a duty, true enough, which is but dimly seen and imperfectly fulfilled. The greater part of these benefactions is directed to purposes which have but a slight or indirect bearing upon the relief of social distress, the restraint of injustice, or the mitigation of remediable hardships. The giving is even often economically false, and if carried to an extreme would prove disastrous to the community; for in many cases it is a transmutation of wealth from a status of active capital, wherein it makes possible a greater diffusion of comfort, to a status of comparative sterility. But, tho often mistaken as is the conception and futile the fulfilment of this duty, the fact that it is apprehended at all is one of far-reaching importance.

The limitation which democracy puts

upon the new feudalism is also important. For democracy will endure, in spite of the new order. "Like death," said Disraeli, "it gives back nothing." Something of its substance it gives back, it must be confessed; for it permits the most serious encroachments upon its rights; but of its outer forms it yields nothing, and thus it retains the potentiality of exerting its will in whatever direction it may see fit. And this fact, tho now but feebly recognized by the feudal barons, will be better understood by them as time runs on, and they will bear in mind the limit of popular patience. It is an elastic limit, of a truth; for the mass of mankind, as both Hamlet and Thomas Jefferson observed, are more ready to endure known ills than to fly to others that they know not. It is a limit which, to be heeded, needs only to be carefully studied. Macaulay's famous dictum, that the privileged classes, when their rule is threatened, always bring about their own ruin by making further exactions, is likely, in this case, to prove untrue. A wiser forethought begins to prevail among the autocrats of to-day—a forethought destined to grow and expand and to prove of inestimable value when bequeathed to their successors. Our nobility will thus temper their exactions to an endurable limit; and they will distribute benefits to a de-

gree that makes a tolerant, if not a satisfied people. They may even make a working principle of Bentham's maxim, and after, of course, appropriating the first and choicest fruits of industry to themselves, may seek to promote the "greatest happiness of the greatest number." For therein will lie their greater security.

Of the particular forms which this new feudalism will take there are already numerous indications which furnish grounds for more or less confident prediction. All societies evolve naturally out of their predecessors. In sociology, as in biology, there is no cell without a parent cell. The society of each generation develops a multitude of spontaneous and acquired variations, and out of these, by a blending process of natural and conscious selection, the succeeding society is evolved. The new feudalism is but an orderly outgrowth of past and present tendencies and conditions.

Unlike the old feudalism it is not confined to the country. Qualified in certain respects tho it be, it has yet a far wider province and scope of action. The great manorial estates now being created along the banks of the Hudson, along the shores of Long Island Sound and Lake Michigan, are but its pleasure places—its Sans Soucis, its Bagatelles.

For from being the foundation of its revenues, as were the estates of the old feudalism, these are the prodigally expensive playthings of the new. The oil wells, the mines, the grain fields, the forests and the great thoroughfares of the land are its ultimate sources of revenue; but its strongholds are in the cities. It is in these centers of activity, with their warehouses, where the harvests are hoarded; their workshops, where the metals and woods are fashioned into articles of use; their great distributing houses; their exchanges; their enormously valuable franchises to be had for the asking or the seizing, and their pressure of population, which forces an hourly increase in the exorbitant value of land, that the new feudalism finds the field best adapted for its main operations.

Bondage to the land was the basis of villeinage in the old *régime*; bondage to the job will be the basis of villeinage in the new. The wage-system will endure, for it is an incomparably simpler means of determining the baron's volume of profits than were the "boon-works," the "week-works" and the *corvées* of old. But with increasing concentration on the one hand, and the fiercer competition for employment on the other, the secured job will become the laborer's fortress, which he will hardly dare to

evacuate. The hope of bettering his condition by surrendering one place in the expectation of getting another will be qualified by a restraining prudence. He will no longer trust his individual strength, but will protest against ill conditions, or, in the last resort, strike, only in company with a formidable host of his fellows. And even the collective assertion of his demands will be restrained more and more as he considers recurring failures of his efforts such as that of the recent steel strike. Moreover, concentration gives opportunity for an almost indefinite extension of the blacklist: a person of offensive activity may be denied work in every feudal shop and on every feudal farm from one end of the country to the other. He will be a hardy and reckless industrial villein indeed who will dare incur the enmity of the Duke of the Oil Trust when he knows that his actions will be promptly communicated to the banded autocracy of dukes, earls and marquises of the steel, coal, iron, window glass, lumber and traffic industries.

Of the three under classes of the old feudalism—sub-tenants, cotters and villeins—the first two are already on the ground, and the last is in process of restoration. But the vast complexity of modern society specializes functions, and for the new feudalism still other

classes are required. It is a difficult task properly to differentiate these classes. They shade off almost imperceptibly into one another; and the dynamic processes of modern industry often hurl, in one mighty convulsion, great bodies of individuals from a higher to a lower class, blurring or obscuring the lines of demarcation. Nevertheless, to take a figure from geology, these convulsions become less and less frequent as the substratum of industrial processes becomes more fixed and regular; the classes become more stable and show more distinct differences, and they will tend, under the new *régime*, to the formal institution of graded caste. At the bottom are the wastrels, at the top the barons; and the gradation, when the new *régime* shall have become fully developed, whole and perfect in its parts, will be about as follows:

I. The barons, graded on the basis of possessions.

II. The courtiers and court-agents.

III. The workers in pure and applied science, artists and physicians. The new feudalism, like most autocracies, will foster not only the arts, but also certain kinds of learning—particularly the kinds which are unlikely to disturb the minds of the multitude. A future Marsh or Cope or Le Conte will be liberally patronized and left free to dis-

cover what he will; and so, too, an Edison or a Marconi. Only they must not meddle with anything relating to social science. For obvious reasons, also, physicians will occupy a position of honor and comparative freedom under the new *régime*.

IV. The *entrepreneurs*, the managers of the great industries, transformed into a salaried class.

V. The foremen and superintendents. This class has heretofore been recruited largely from the skilled workers, but with the growth of technical education in schools and colleges and the development of fixed caste, it is likely to become entirely differentiated.

VI. The villeins of the cities and towns, more or less regularly employed, who do skilled work and are partially protected by organization.

VII. The villeins of the cities and towns who do unskilled work and are unprotected by organization. They will comprise the laborers, domestics and clerks.

VIII. The villeins of the manorial estates, of the great farms, the mines and the forests.

IX. The small-unit farmers (land owning), the petty tradesmen and manufacturers.

X. The sub-tenants on the manorial es-

tates and great farms (corresponding to the class of "free tenants" in the old feudalism).

XI. The cotters, living in isolated places and on the margin of cultivation.

XII. The tramps, the occasionally employed, the unemployed—the wastrels of city and country.

This, then, is the table of socio-industrial rank leading down from the feudatory barons. It is a classification open, of course, to amendment. The minor shareholders, it may be suggested, are not provided for; and certain other omissions might be named. But it is not possible to anticipate every detail; and, as for the small shareholders, who now occupy a wide range, from comparative poverty to comparative affluence, it seems likely that the complete development of the new *régime* will practically eliminate them. Other critics, furthermore, will object to the basis of gradation. The basis employed is not relative wealth, a test which nine out of ten persons would unhesitatingly apply in social classification; it is not comparative earning capacity, economic freedom, nor intellectual ability. Rather, it is the relative degree of comfort—material, moral and intellectual—which each class contributes to the nobility. The wastrels contribute least, and they are the lowest. The foremen, super-

intendents and *entrepreneurs* contribute most of the purely material comfort, and their place is correspondingly high. But higher yet is the rank of the courtiers and court agents, the legates and nuncios. This class will include the editors of "respectable" and "safe" newspapers, the pastors of "conservative" and "wealthy" churches, the professors and teachers in endowed colleges and schools, lawyers generally, and most judges and politicians. During the transition period there will be a gradual elimination of the more unserviceable of these persons, with the result that in the end this class will be largely transformed. The individual security of place and livelihood of its members will then depend on the harmony of their utterances and acts with the wishes of the great nobles; and so long as they rightly fulfil their functions their recompense will be generous. They will be at once the assuagers of popular suspicion and discontent and the providers of moral and intellectual anodynes for the barons. Such of them, however, as have not the tact or fidelity to do or say what is expected of them will be promptly forced into class XI or XII, or, in extreme cases, banished from all classes, to become the wretched pariahs of society.

Through all the various activities of these populous classes (except the last) our Benevolent Feudalism will carry on

the nation's work. Its operations will begin with the land, whence it extracts the raw material of commerce. It is just at this stage of its workings that it will differ most from the customary forms of the old. The cotters will be pushed further back into isolation, and the sub-tenants will be confined to the grubbing away at their ill-recompensed labors. It is with the eighth class, the villeins of farm and wood and mine, that we have here to deal. The ancient ceremony of "homage," the swearing of personal fidelity to the lord, is transformed into that of the beseeching of the foreman for work. The wage system, with its mechanical simplicity, continuing in force, there is an absence of the old exactions of special work from the employed villein. A mere altering of the wage scale appropriates to the great noble whatever share of the product he feels he may safely demand for himself. Thus "week-work," the three or four days' toil in each week which the villein had to give unrecompensed to the lord, and "boon-work," the several days of extra toil three or four times a year, will never be revived. Even the company store, the modern form of feudal exaction, will in time be given up, for at best it is but a clumsy and offensive makeshift, and defter and less irritating means are at hand for reaching the same result.

There will hardly be a restoration of "relief," the payment of a year's dues on inheriting an allotment of land, or of "heriot," the payment of a valuable gift from the possessions of a deceased relative. Indeed, these tithes may not be worth the bother of collecting; for the villein's inheritance will probably be but moderate, as befits his state and the place which God and the nobility have ordained for him.

The raw materials gathered, the scene of operations shifts from the country to the cities and great towns. But many of the latter will lose, during the transition period, a considerable part of their greatness, from the shutting up of needless factories and the concentration of production in the larger workshops. There will thus be large displacements of labor, and for a time a wide extension of suffering. Popular discontent will naturally follow, and it will be fomented, to some extent, by agitation; but the agitation will be guarded in expression and action, and it will be relatively barren of result. The possible danger therefrom will have been provided against, and a host of economists, preachers and editors will be ready to show indisputably that the evolution taking place is for the best interests of all; that it follows a "natural and inevitable law;" that those who have been

thrown out of work have only their own incompetency to blame; that all who really want work can get it, and that any interference with the prevailing *régime* will be sure to bring on a panic, which will only make matters worse. Hearing this, the multitude will hesitatingly acquiesce and thereupon subside; and tho occasionally a radical journal or a radical agitator will counsel revolt, the mass will remain quiescent. Gradually, too, by one method or another, sometimes by the direct action of the nobility, the greater part of the displaced workers will find some means of getting bread, while those who cannot will be eliminated from the struggle and cease to be a potential factor for trouble.

In its general aspects shop industry will be carried on much as now. Only the shops will be very much larger, the individual and total output will be greater, the unit cost of production will be lessened. Wages and hours will for a time continue on something like the present level; but, despite the persistence of the unions, no considerable gains in behalf of labor are to be expected. The owners of all industry worth owning, the barons will laugh at threats of striking and boycotting. No competitor can possibly make capital out of the labor disputes of another, for there will be no competitors, actual or potential. What the barons will

most dread will be the collective assertion of the villeins at the polls; but this, from experience, they will know to be a thing of no immediate danger. By the putting forward of a hundred irrelevant issues they can hopelessly divide the voters at each election; or, that failing, there is always to be trusted as a last resort the cry of impending panic.

Practically all industry will be regulated in terms of wages, and the *entrepreneurs*, who will then have become the chief salaried officers of the nobles, will calculate to a hair the needful production for each year. Waste and other losses will thus be reduced to a minimum. A vast scheme of exact systematization will have taken the place of the old free competition, and industry will be carried on as by clockwork.

Gradually a change will take place in the aspirations and conduct of the younger generations. Heretofore there has been at least some degree of freedom of choice in determining one's occupation, however much that freedom has been curtailed by actual economic conditions. But with the settling of industrial processes comes more and more constraint. The dream of the children of the farms to escape from their drudgery by migrating to the city, and from the stepping stone of a clerkly place at \$3 a week to rise to af-

fluence, will be given over, and they will follow the footsteps of their fathers. A like fixity of condition will be observed in the cities, and the sons of clerks and of mechanics and of day laborers will tend to accept their environment of birth and training and abide by it. It is a phenomenon observable in all countries where the economic pressure is severe, and it is certain to obtain in feudal America.

The sub-tenants and the small-unit producers and distributors will be confined within smaller and smaller limits, while the foremen, the superintendents and the *entrepreneurs* of the workshops will attain to greater power and recompense. But the chief glory of the new *régime*, next to that of the nobles, will be that of the class of courtiers and court-agents. Theirs, in a sense, will be the most important function in the State—"to justify the ways of God [and the nobility] to man." Two divisions of the courtier class, however, will find life rather a burdensome travail. They are the judges and the politicians. Holding their places at once by popular election and by the grace of the barons, they will be fated to a constant see-saw of conflicting obligations. They must, in some measure, satisfy the demands of the multitude, and yet, on the other hand, they must obey the commands from above.

The outlines of the present State loom but feebly through the intricate network of the new system. The nobles will have attained to complete power, and the motive and operation of Government will have become simply the registering and administering of their collective will. And yet the State will continue very much as now, just as the form and name of the Roman Republic continued under Augustus. The present State machinery is admirably adapted for the subtle and extra-legal exertion of power by an autocracy; and while improvements to that end might unquestionably be made, the barons will hesitate to take action which will needlessly arouse popular suspicions. From petty constable to Supreme Court Justice the officials will understand, or be made to understand, the golden mean of their duties; and except for an occasional rascally Jacobin, whom it may for a time be difficult to suppress, they will be faithful and obey.

The manorial courts, with powers exercised by the local lords, will not, as a rule, be restored. Probably the "court baron," for determining tenantry and wage questions, will be revived. It may even come as a natural outgrowth of the present conciliation boards, with a successor of the Committee of Thirty-six as a sort of general court baron for the nation. But the

“ court leet,” the manorial institution for punishing misdemeanors, wherein the baron holds his powers by special grant from the central authority of the State, we shall never know again. It is far simpler and will be less disturbing to the popular mind to leave in existence the present courts so long as the baron can dictate the general policy of justice.

Armed force will, of course, be employed to overawe the discontented and to quiet unnecessary turbulence. Unlike the armed forces of the old feudalism, the nominal control will be that of the State; the soldiery will be regular and not irregular. Not again will the barons risk the general indignation arising from the employment of Pinkertons and other private armies. The worker has unmistakably shown his preference, when he is to be subdued, for the militia and the Federal army. Broadly speaking, it is not an unreasonable attitude; and it goes without saying that it will be respected. The militia of our Benevolent Feudalism will be recruited, as now, mostly from the clerkly class; and it will be officered largely by the sons and nephews of the barons. But its actions will be tempered by a saner policy. Governed by those who have most to fear from popular exasperation, it will show a finer restraint.

A general view of the new society will present little of startling novelty. A person leaving this planet to-day and revisiting "the pale glimpses of the moon" when the new order is in full swing will from superficial observation see but few changes. *Alter et idem*—another, yet the same—he will say. Only by closer view will he mark the deepening and widening of channels along which the powerful currents of present tendencies are borne; only so will he note the effect of the more complete development of the mighty forces now at work.

So comprehensive and so exact will be the social and political control that it will be exercised in a constantly widening scope and over a growing multiplicity of details. The distribution of wages and dividends will be nicely balanced with a watchful regard for possible dissatisfaction. Old-age pensions to the more faithful employees, such as those granted by the Illinois Central, the Pennsylvania, the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company, the Metropolitan Traction Company, or the Lackawanna, will be generally distributed, for the hard work will be done only by the most vigorous, and a large class of destitute unemployed will be a needless menace to the *régime*. Peace will be the main desideratum, and its cultivation will be the most honored science of the

age. A happy blending of generosity and firmness will characterize all dealings with open discontent; but the prevention of discontent will be the prior study, to which the intellect and the energies of the nobles and their legates will be ever bent. To that end the teachings of the schools and colleges, the sermons, the editorials, the stump orations, and even the plays at the theaters will be skilfully and persuasively molded; and the questioning heart of the poor, which perpetually seeks some answer to the painful riddle of the earth, will meet with a multitude of mollifying responses. These will be: From the churches, that discontent is the fruit of atheism, and that religion alone is a solace for earthly wo; from the colleges, that discontent is ignorant and irrational, since conditions have certainly bettered in the last one hundred years; from the newspapers, that discontent is anarchy; and from the stump orators that it is unpatriotic, since this nation is the greatest and most glorious that ever the sun shone upon. As of old, these reasons will for the time suffice; and against the possibility of recurrent questionings new apologetics will be skilfully formulated, to be put forth as occasion requires. On all sides will be observed a greater respect for power; and the former tendency toward rash and bitter criticism of the upper classes will decline.

The arts, too, will be modified. Literature will take on the hues and tones of the good-natured days of Charles II. Instead of poetry, however, the innocuous novel will flourish best; every flowery courtier will write romance, and the literary darling of the renaissance will be an Edmund Waller of fiction. A lineal descendant of the famous Lely, who

“ . . . on animated canvas stole
The sleepy eye that spoke the melting soul,”
will be the laureled chief of our painters; and sculpture, architecture and the lesser arts, under the spell of changed influences, will undergo a like transformation.

This, then, in the rough, is our Benevolent Feudalism to-be. It is not precisely a Utopia, not an “island valley of Avilion;” and yet it has its commendable, even its fascinating features. “The empire is peace,” shouted the partisans of Louis Napoleon; and a like cry, with an equal ardency of enthusiasm, will be uttered by the supporters of the new *régime*. Peace and stability will be its defensive arguments, and peace and stability it will probably bring. But tranquil or unquiet, whatever it may be, its triumph is assured; and existent forces are carrying us toward it with an ever accelerating speed. One power alone might prevent it—the collective popular will that it shall not be. But of

this there is no fear on the part of the barons, and but little expectation on the part of the underlings.*

NEW YORK CITY.

*Since the publication of this article my attention has been called to an address, entitled "The New Feudalism," delivered by Mr. Benjamin A. Richmond, of Cumberland, Md., before the Maryland Bar Association in July, 1898. I had never seen or heard of this address, or of any other treatment of the subject; nor had any of the friends and acquaintances to whom I mentioned the matter. In the last few months casual and scattered references to "feudal times" have been met with occasionally; but previous to fifteen months ago, when I first outlined my article, I had seen nothing, so far as I can now recall, in the slightest manner alluding to such a concept.

Mr. Richmond's address is an interesting and able presentation of the subject. It is written from a legal viewpoint, and the treatment is therefore widely different from that of mine; nevertheless, in two instances he and I have managed to hit upon very similar phrases. Mr. Richmond is unquestionably entitled to the credit of priority in the general concept, and I am glad to acknowledge his claim.—W. J. G.

ADDENDUM.

BY THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC STUDY.

Mr. Ghent has supplied, in one of his closing sentences, an important qualification to his prophecy: "*One power alone might prevent it [the consummation of a new feudal system]—the collective popular will that it shall not be.*" How correctly, or incorrectly, on the whole, he has seized upon current phenomena, and how justly or unjustly he has interpreted current tendencies we may well leave to the individual judgment of the reader. But at least his basic contention—that whether or not there is now a greater or less number of individual industries than before, social, industrial and political power is rapidly centralizing in a few hands—is hardly to be disputed. Manhood suffrage has so far proved but an ineffective obstacle to this concentration.

Since concentration is everywhere apparent, and since every indication points to its continuance, there remains to the citizenship the choice only of how and for what purpose that concentration shall be perfected. It is idle to talk of a return to the clumsy and chaotic methods of free competition. The public must

decide whether unified industry is to be carried on for the benefit of the many or the benefit of the few.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Ghent is entirely wrong in his assumption of the continued quiescence of the masses. Historic parallels can be quoted, it is true, for such a view: the England of Richard II and again of Charles II furnish pitiful instances of popular submission following upon periods of strenuous freedom of action. But the England of 1382 and of 1661 has small counterpart in the United States of 1902. The people who sacrificed so much of their blood and treasure, first, to win their independence; second, to maintain it, and third, to preserve their national integrity, have surely within themselves the potency "to shape the future hour," to checkmate the ill, and to foster the beneficent tendencies of the time, and to erect upon the ruins of a baffled oligarchy the solid structure of a co-operative commonwealth.

EXTRACTS FROM THE CONSTITUTION OF
THE COLLECTIVIST SOCIETY.

We believe that the true principle of production and distribution is expressed in the dictum: "From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs." This principle requires that all should have the opportunity of useful work, and that all should engage in useful work under the penalty of public disgrace; that all should receive comfortable incomes except those who will not work, and that none should receive excessively high incomes, as the latter are morally injurious both to the recipient and to the community. The ultimate operation of this principle will be toward the ideal of practical equality of incomes.

* * * * *

We believe that the establishment of this principle will require the transfer of the means of production and distribution into the hands of the community; and that every transfer of this nature must be accompanied by just compensation.

* * * * *

We believe that the measures which at present promise best results are:

Legislation to secure work to the unemployed; to establish a maximum day and a minimum wage for all workers; and to provide pensions for the aged.

The taxation of franchises at their full value, and the graduated taxation of land-values, incomes and inheritances.

The assumption by city and State governments of enlarged and new activities for the common benefit, including the ownership of public utilities.

The assumption by the national government of the telegraphs, railroads and mines.

We pledge ourselves:

To work for the establishment of the principle declared above by such means as are for each most practicable.

To study the labor question and the various movements for social betterment earnestly and without prejudice.

To use our best efforts to strengthen and promote the labor union movement.

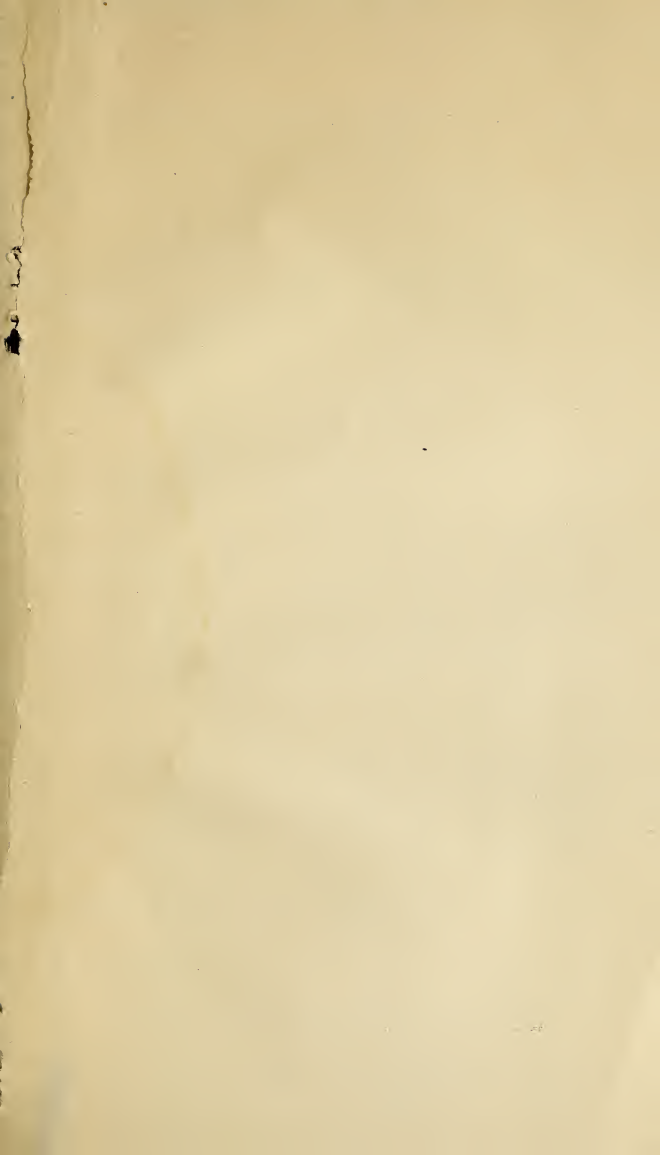
To cherish comradeship with all in every country who are working in a humane spirit for the

cause of social betterment, whether within or without the political Socialist movement.

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